Expansion programmes of Bombay Telephones for Eastern Suburbs

1460. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state the future programme of expansion and provision of new facilities to the subscribers in the eastern suburbs of Bombay of the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd., Bombay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): The expansion of 18,200 lines & 22,000 lines has been planned for the year 1988-89 and 1989-90 respectively, in the Eastern suburbs of Bombay. All new facilities planned for Bombay, like Automatic Message Accounting, Radio Paging System and Cellular Mobile Telephone Services will also be provided to these subscribers.

New telephone Exchange at Kurla in Bombay

1461. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no Telephone Exchange at Kurla in Bombay;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Kurla area has to be serviced by the Ghatkopar Telephone Exchange; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to set up a new telephone exchange at Kurla in Bombay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir. There is no telephone exchange at Kurla at present.

(b) Presently, Kurla area is served by the Exchanges at Vile Parle, Bandra and Ghatkopar.

(c) Land for telephone exchange at Kurla has just been acquired. Plans for building construction are under formulation. A new digital-electronic exchange of suitable capacity has been planned at Kurla during the 8th Five Year Plan period.

Telephone Exchange at Bhandup, Bombay

1462. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a necessity of a new telephone exchange at Bhandup in Bombay; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir. There is a necessity for a telephone exchange at Bhandup.

(b) Land acquisition proceedings are in progress for acquiring land for a telephone exchange building at Bhandup. An electronic exchange of suitable capacity has been planned during the 8th Five Year Plan period.

Demand for new electronic exchange in Bombay

1463. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at Dr. Gopalrao Deshmuh Marg (Peddar Road) at Bombay there is a plot of land belonging to Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd.;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that there is a great demand for a new electronic telephone exchange in this area as there is no spare capacity in Gamdevi Exchange; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken in this connection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It is planned to construct a Telephone Exchange Building on the plot in Cumbala Hill at Peddar and instal a new 18000 lines Electronic Exchange by the year 1991-92. Meanwhile, two 8000 lines capacity Remote Line Units are planned to be installed in the year 1989-90 and 1990-91 in the existing shed on this plot to give new telephone connections in the area.

Steps to ease the financial crisis of cement industry

1464. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 92 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 29th February, 1988 and state:

(a) whether the financial health of the cement manufacturing units has deteriorated recently giving a jolt to the long-term investment plans for the cement industry; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the action taken by Government to redeem the situation?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO): (a) Representations have been received from cement industry that a number of cement factories are facing financial problems, due to increase in input costs and fall in market price of non-levy cement. The temporary recession in demand as a result of severe drought in many States could be a reason for the fall in market price. It is too early however to assess if the present condition will have any impact on long term investment plans.

(b) With a view to improve the economic viability of the cement industry, Government have recently announced the following incentives and reliefs to the industry. These are in addition to those mentioned in the answer given to Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 92 on 29-2-88:—

(i) Levy obligation of sick cement units has been reduced from 30 per cent to 15 per cent of actual production with effect from 1-3-1988.

(ii) Levy obligation of pre-1982 units has been reduced from 50 per cent to 30 per cent of actual production with effect from 1-3-1988.

(iii) Levy obligation of units which commenced production sometime prior to 1-1-1982 but deemed to have started their production after 1-1-82, has been reduced from 30 per cent to 20 per cent of actual production with effect from 1-3-1988.

(iv) Excise duty on cement has been reduced from Rs. 225/- per tonne to Rs. 205/- per tonne with effect from 1-3-1988.

Crisis in the engineering industry in the western region

1465. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the engineering industry in the western region of the country is in a bad shape due to shortage of raw material, low capacity utilisation and financial constraints; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to help the industry?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY SHRI J. VENGAL RAO): (a) and (b) In respect of certain raw materials, the engineering industry is facing some shortage. Government have taken steps to arrange for the import of such raw materials as well as for augmenting their indigenous production so that industry is in a position to obtain its raw material requirements.

New incentive package for industrialisation of backward areas

1466. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have recently announced a